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STATE FOR AF/W, AF/RSA AND NEA/MAG

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PINS](#) [KDEM](#) [MR](#) [TS](#) [LY](#) [AG](#) [MO](#)
SUBJECT: RABAT SEES AMU MAINTAINING ITS COURSE ON
MAURITANIA, STILL WORTH SUPPORTING

REF: A. STATE 038371 (NOTAL)
[1](#)B. RABAT 0256 (NOTAL)

Classified By: CDA Robert P. Jackson for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: The Arab Maghreb Union (AMU) decision to send observers to Mauritania was confirmed by the recent ministerial in Tripoli, in which the junta's Foreign Minister had a full role, according to the Moroccan Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation (MFA) lead on the AMU. MFA AMU Division Chief Lahcen Saile said Morocco disagreed with the U.S. stance on Mauritania and supports the AMU decision to send observers to Mauritania's presidential elections, as did other members, including Algeria. Speaking in blunter terms than the Embassy has heard from his bosses, Saile asserted, "European views on Mauritania have changed. Why haven't yours?" He noted that Rabat believes that failure of the elections could lead to greater internal instability and would negatively impact Morocco's security. The Community of Sahelo-Saharan States, an African union to which Morocco belongs, will also send observers. At the AMU ministerial, representatives of all five member countries welcomed the policies of President Obama and expressed an interest in greater U.S. engagement in the organization, he said, noting they flew together to the Cordoba ministerial with West European counterparts. Embassy also communicated points to AMU staff, but the organization is tied up all week in the 5 5 meetings; so we will follow up for a response. End Summary.

Waiting For an Evolution in U.S. Policy

[1](#)2. (C) "We are waiting for the U.S. position on Mauritania to evolve," Lahcen Saile, Chief of the Arab Maghreb Union division of the Moroccan Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, told PolOff and PolCouns in response to an April 22 reftel demarche. Morocco disagreed with the U.S. position on Mauritania and supported the Arab Maghreb Union's decision to send election observers to monitor the June Presidential elections. Citing Spain as an example, Saile asserted that "European views on Mauritania have changed," and then asked, "Why haven't yours?" He dismissed the African Union's (AU,s) decision not to send election observers, arguing that this reflects the constraints of the AU rather than an African consensus. He noted that the Community of Sahelo-Saharan States (CEN-SAD), an organization of 28 North and West African countries (not including Algeria), has agreed to send observers, and that the AMU (which includes Algeria, Mauritania, Morocco, Tunisia, and Libya), also

supports the move.

13. (C) Saile reiterated Rabat's concern over an unstable Mauritania, noting its geostrategic importance for Morocco's stability. "Mauritania is very delicate at the moment," he stressed; "If the elections do not go smoothly, stability within the country will deteriorate."

AMU Likes "Obama's Program"

14. (C) Saile provided a brief readout of the recent AMU ministerial held April 19 in Tripoli. The participants discussed deradicalization and how to promote external commerce, as well as ways to restart the Investment Bank of the Maghreb. Comparing the AMU to a baby, Saile noted that "sometimes you have to give it a little milk to keep it alive" and expressed hope that the U.S. would deepen engagement with the organization. He told us that representatives of all five countries welcomed the "encouraging" policies of President Obama, saying, "So far, we like the program." They supported the ongoing working level-contacts with the USG, as well as higher level contacts. Following the ministerial, all five AMU Foreign Ministers flew together to Cordoba, Spain, for the (5 5) Conference with Western Mediterranean Foreign Ministers, their counterparts from Portugal, Spain, Italy, France, and Malta, he told us. Echoing what Embassy previously heard from AMU head Ben Yahya, Saile said the AMU has made some limited progress on technical functional issues but has gone nowhere on political issues or real integration.

15. (SBU) With AMU staff in Cordoba for the 5 5 meeting, we conveyed USG concerns electronically, and will follow up seeking a response on their return.

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<http://www.intelink.sgov.gov/wiki/Portal:Moro> cco

Jackson